

Project on IEd Students' Beliefs about Teaching and Learning and Knowledge Acquisition

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This project used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine year 1 and year 4 students' epistemological beliefs and conceptions of teaching. Results show that most of the student-teachers strongly believed that learning effort was more important than innate ability in acquiring knowledge and that knowledge changes. They also inclined to question teacher as the authority of knowledge. As regards conceptions of teaching, their espousal of the constructivist approach to teaching was significantly stronger than their espousal of the traditional approach. Path analysis indicated that epistemological beliefs have significant predictive influence on conceptions of teaching. In general, the student-teachers who held sophisticated epistemological beliefs were more likely to adopt the constructivist conceptions of teaching and those with more naïve epistemological belief preferred the traditional conceptions. In-depth analysis of interview data of final year students revealed some student teachers who possessed both naïve and sophisticated epistemological beliefs adopted a constructivist view of teaching; in contrast, some student-teachers who espoused sophisticated epistemological beliefs were found to hold both constructivist and traditional views regarding their conceptions of teaching. The inconsistencies in the results will be explained, and implications for teacher education programs and future studies will be discussed.

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